

LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

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terdependence

For Growth in Faith and Mission

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Editor's Notes

interdependence—the word may roll “trippingly on the tongue,” it is, these days, a word much on hearts, minds and souls of the faithful. So much so that Women of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has chosen interdependence as one of its organizing principles (see outside back cover) and ELCA embraces it as a way of undergirding all its activities.

Interdependence is that marvelous process in which all parties give, receive, learn *and* teach, speak, listen, evangelize *and* are evangelized, support *and* are supported, *and* are loved. It is a way of ministry that says “We are so much richer for having the gifts and talents of all God’s children as a part of our mission.”

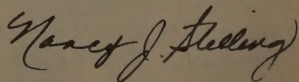
In the vine, you are the branch—St. John’s way of talking about interdependence, a biblical truth found in both the new Bible study, *The Gospel of John* (running September through December) and in Smith’s lead article (p. 4).

Global interdependence is reflected in the article “Linked in Mission,” the Thankoffering service by Esau of Hong Kong, in Ruth Sigmond’s meditation highlighting stories from India, and in Susan’s poignant poem about Lutheran World Relief quilts that “multiply through Tuesdays of the year.” Three Church Women United are profiled in “About Women” to explore the ecumenical dimensions of interdependence.

This issue also pays tribute to Christian education ministries, which so often involve the talents of women. “The Lutheran Education Connection,” “The Teacher as Learner,” and “Two Bible Study Reflections” (in which two women share their love of Scripture), lift education as a means to “grow in faith and mission.”

Two final notes. Producing LWT is very much an interdependent effort, and LWT wishes to give formal thanks to those many people who shared their time and expertise as issue planners to date. Our appreciation goes to Ivis LaRiviere-Mestre, Kwan-ja Yu, Inez Schwarzkopf, Faith Fretheim, Renee Elms, Joan Pope, Nancy Koester, Marcia Erickson, Bonnie Belasic, Betty Nyhus, Marilyn Ehline, Ken Smith and Jennifer Peterson. The magazine is indeed richer for you all.

Our thanks also go to Sylvia Pridal (“How Do You Read LWT?”), on whose suggestion you may be reading these Editor’s Notes. We invite you to be enriched by this issue—however you read LWT.



EDITOR

LETTERS

Letter to Letter

I would like to respond to Ms. Baker's comment (June "Letters") regarding the Psalms Bible study. First, I want to commend Fred and Leola Gaiser for an excellent, inspiring, theologically sound study. [The study] is difficult at times, as we are called to wrestle with some tough questions and vital issues. Our desire for easy, comfortable, convenient solutions is reflective of an age that seeks instant answers. Sometimes it's just not possible. The psalms plunge us directly into the conflicts of life and God goes with us.

*The Rev. Hal A. Schroetter
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin*

I was appalled by the letter (July LWT) from a South Dakota reader regarding the novel *Born of the Sun* [reviewed in the April issue]. She was "shocked by the offensive language," and preferred "not to put books with such language in our church library." Unfortunately, "offensive language" sometimes is necessary to portray unjust and obscene realities—like the conditions under which our Namibian brothers and sisters in Christ are forced to live. Who knows what kind of peaceful conditions might come to exist if enough Christians were "offended" into working for peace and justice?

*Deb Rossbach
Cleveland, Ohio*

June LWT

The article "Stephanie" by Howard W. Hinkeldey portrays with simple eloquence this special child's family life. I have had the privilege of teaching several special children basic Christian education. So often I was the one who was taught by their sincere witness. Thanks for reawakening these fond memories for me.

*Joy S. Burns
Grand Blanc, Michigan*

The article "Private Fears—Silent Tears" touched me, angered me, and gave me hope. I appreciate courage and commitment "R.J. 'Ellie' have to their spiritual journey of healing themselves and for helping me to heal some of my own broken pieces.

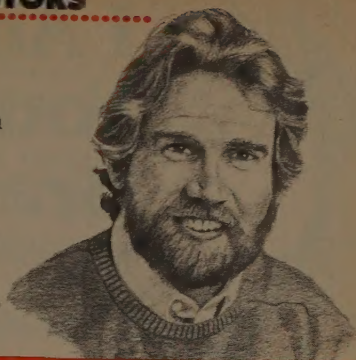
*Kathy
Sioux City, Iowa*

I was thrilled to see the picture of Lorna on the cover of the June LWT. In this day when many are having early genetic testing to discover if they are carrying a child "suffering" with Down's syndrome, it exemplifies the fact that these individuals are truly children of God. Lorna appears to be a helpful contributing member of our society, not an individual "suffering" from a genetic disorder.

*Deedy Payne
Glen Ellyn, Illinois*

CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. Ken Smith contributes the logical reflection, "I Am the Vine, Are the Branches." Pastor Smith is a program specialist for youth education and catechetics in the Division for Congregational Life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A charter member of the ELCA's Lutheran Men in Mission, Pastor Smith lives with his wife, Mary, and two teen-aged children in Oak Ridge, Illinois.



Nancy and Craig Koester, St. Paul, Minnesota, wrote the new (September through December) Bible study on the Gospel of John. Both have written study materials previously for the Lutheran Church. Nancy is currently doing graduate study in theology at Luther Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul. Craig, a former parish pastor, teaches the New Testament at the same school. The Koesters have two children, Matthew, 8, and Emily, 4.

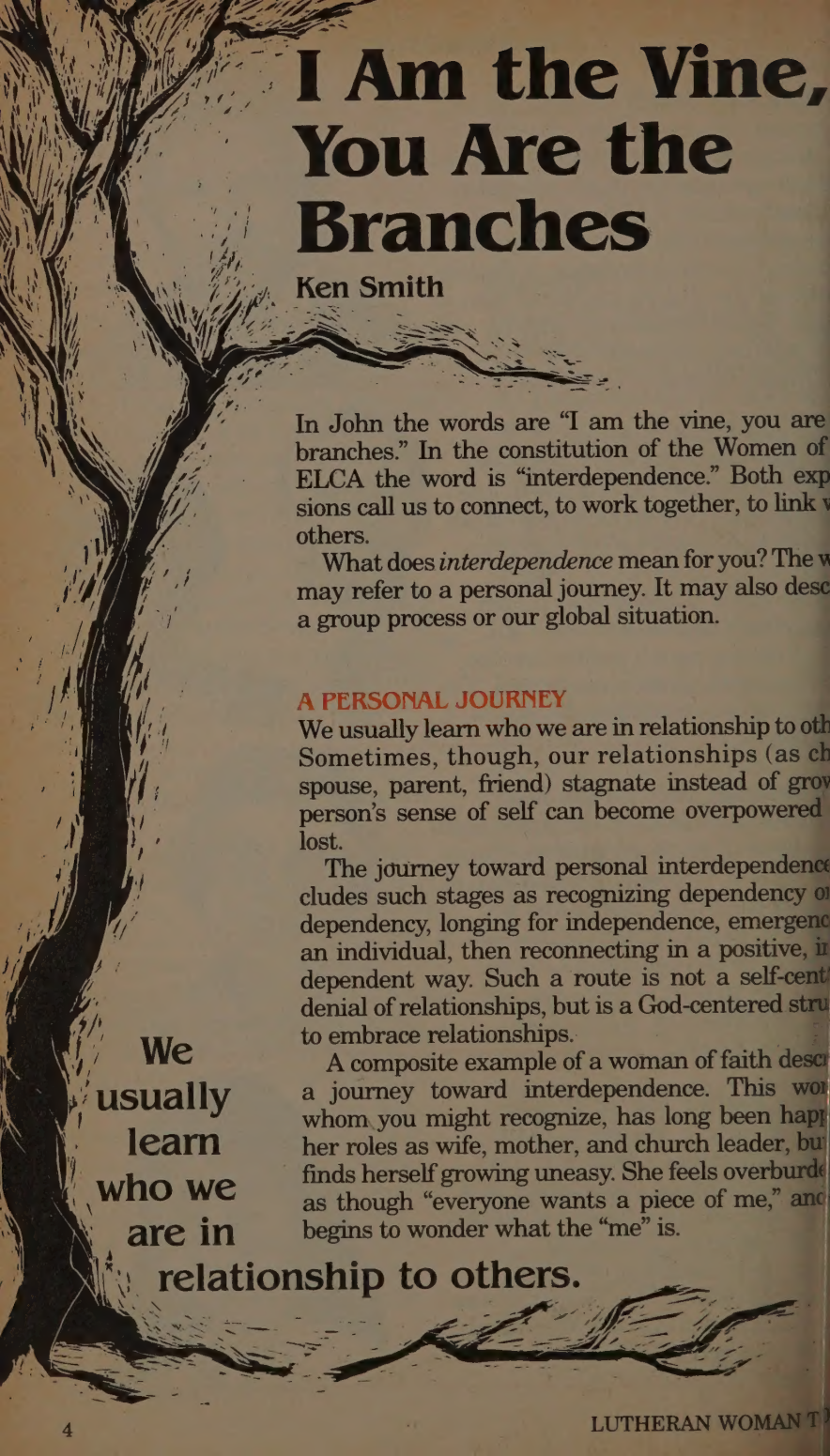


Sylvia Pridal ("How Do You Read the Bible?") has served for the past two years as president of the Southwestern Minnesota-Synodical Women's Organization of members of the ELCA. Sylvia and her husband live on a farm near Porter, Minnesota. A member of Bethel Lutheran Church, Sylvia is the mother of four, and, she says, "grandmother of five of the grandsons ever."



Child, Esther Tse ("A Thanksgiving Service," p. 44) fled to Hong Kong from mainland China with her mother. She embraced Christianity as a teenager and earned a master of divinity degree at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong. With her mother, she came to the United States, and she is now a doctoral student at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago.





I Am the Vine, You Are the Branches

Ken Smith

In John the words are "I am the vine, you are branches." In the constitution of the Women of ELCA the word is "interdependence." Both expressions call us to connect, to work together, to link with others.

What does *interdependence* mean for you? The word may refer to a personal journey. It may also describe a group process or our global situation.

A PERSONAL JOURNEY

We usually learn who we are in relationship to others. Sometimes, though, our relationships (as child, spouse, parent, friend) stagnate instead of grow. A person's sense of self can become overpowered and lost.

The journey toward personal interdependence includes such stages as recognizing dependency or independence, longing for independence, emergence as an individual, then reconnecting in a positive, interdependent way. Such a route is not a self-centered denial of relationships, but is a God-centered struggle to embrace relationships.

A composite example of a woman of faith describes a journey toward interdependence. This woman, whom you might recognize, has long been happy in her roles as wife, mother, and church leader, but she finds herself growing uneasy. She feels overburdened as though "everyone wants a piece of me," and she begins to wonder what the "me" is.

We
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who we
are in

relationship to others.

She is longing for independence. She wants to discover what it means to be her own self. Yet her journey toward independence doesn't come easily. At times there is confusion, guilt, resentment and anger—on her part and on the part of those she is in relationship with.

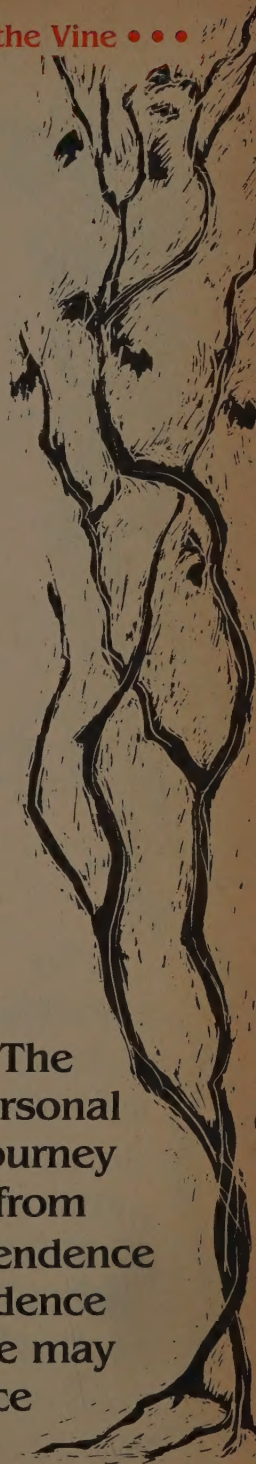
Over time she discovers a new sense of self. She begins to realize that she is becoming the woman God wants her to be. It is independence bought at great price. Some of her old friends do not like her or understand her anymore. A loneliness comes when one's journey takes a different path from those we related to before.

Over time, the woman's newfound self matures and becomes "real." Our friend responds to her longing to reconnect; only now her "me" is not overwhelmed. She brings herself into relationship. She brings herself into the connection.

The woman becomes interdependent. She reconnects to the vine in a new powerful way. Coming to understand her "me" allows her to understand her relationship with God and the whole body of believers. Because of the interdependence the woman experiences as part of the vine and branches, she continues to come, to grow and bear fruit. Her vision embraces people in wider circles. She focuses her love on others, and feels connected to people she hasn't met. She relates to others through Christ and through the hope, even in pain, that God distributes through the vine. Others join her as they walk through their own journey.

The personal journey from dependence or co-dependence to independence to interdependence sometimes takes place in adolescence through young adulthood. Sometimes the process comes later in adult life. It happens for both men and women. The personal journey to interdependence is parallel to the journey that many groups make as people work together.

**The
personal
journey
from
dependence
to independence
to interdependence may
begin during adolescence
or later in adult life.**





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A GROUP JOURNEY

As groups form, time is spent working on relationships. The group is "needy," and the individual members dependent on the group for identity. The members spend time congratulating, comforting and knowing each other.

No matter how cohesive the group is at first, it begins to change. It is not enough for the group—whatever it is, work group, congregation, organization, family—simply to enjoy itself.

Individuals in the group discover their roles and relationships in the group, and begin to redefine themselves. The original coming together breaks down. Members of the group express dissatisfaction and challenge the "groupness." People talk about good old days. The present seems difficult.

At this point the group may disintegrate as members assume independence and "do their own thing," resuming their own, versus the group's, agenda.

Groups can, however, move beyond this stage and mature. Individual concerns and issues are carefully considered. People raise serious questions about the way the group proceeds, works and behaves. The group honestly faces its strengths and weaknesses and decides on a focus. A new sense of working together emerges. Members of the group find themselves renewed by their mutual efforts.

People see themselves now as individuals working together interdependently. There is renewed interest in the group's history, not because past is better, but because the past gives insight into present and future. The group decides to expand and grow. New people are attracted to the group, not because they want to be a part of a group but because they are interested in *this* group and what it stands for.

Groups, families, organizations and congregations—like individuals—mature, passing from dependence through independence to interdependence. Growth is seen most clearly in how the group relates to its leaders. At first the group may be dependent

It is not enough for the group
simply to enjoy itself.

leader or leaders, then demand independence in its leadership, and finally find interdependence in its leadership needs.

GLOBAL JOURNEY

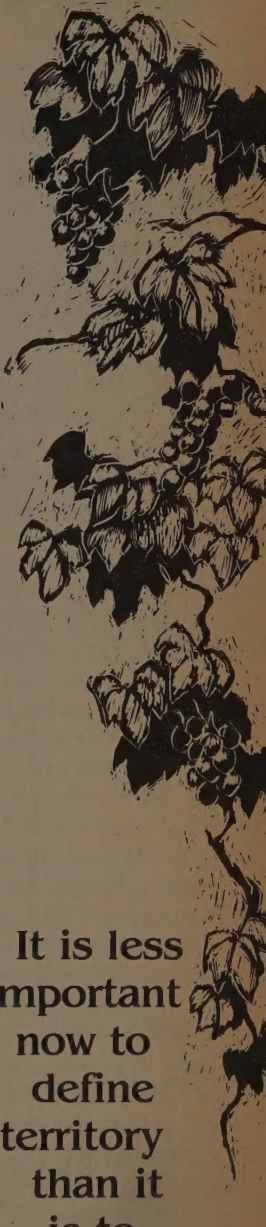
The journey toward interdependence is also a global one. We are at that special moment in history when we have noticed how important it is for human beings to be no longer independent but interdependent. We may be in the midst of a grand global shift away from declaring our independence to working more fully for global awareness.

We are aware of our fragile environment. We sense that a war to protect our independence would threaten the ecology of the planet which supports us all. We know that contemporary economics involves delicate interdependence.

Electronic media heighten our immediate connectiveness. Churches torn by theology and sociology now view themselves as interdependent. It is less important now to define territory than it is to share responsibilities for the care of the territory.

Interdependence is a journey we face as individuals, groups, as a global community. On this journey we carry with us the gospel of John, and the wisdom that Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. The picture of the vine and branches reminds us that in interdependence we are never simply, and only, connected to each other. We are all connected to each other *through God*. Jesus is at the heart of our interdependent relationships.

God calls us to be together. God helps us find ourselves. God unites us to many. Because God is the source, we can relax our hold on each other, and appreciate the independence that is the prelude to interdependence. Because God is the source of relationships, we have confidence that the vine continues through time. The vine entwines us with an unending love, an ultimate unity of all those who are part of the vine of Christ. ■



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territory
than it
is to
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responsibilities
for the care of the territory.



Linked in Mission

Steven and Maureen Nelson were worried. Missionaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serving in the Central African Republic (CAR), the couple had just learned that Benjamin, their five-month-old son, needed surgery for an inguinal hernia—and the surgery had to be done in North America.

Steven Nelson recalled that day in a letter he wrote describing the support he and Maureen experienced in the CAR.

"Soon after we arrived home [from the doctor], our closest neighbor, Helene, stopped by to hear the news. Helene is the wife of our night guard and the mother of nine children, so she knows well our concern for our son.

"Maureen asked Helene to pray. Helene hesitated, then excused herself, saying she'd be right back.

"Not long after, she came back with her husband, Enoch. They sat in our living room and pulled out their hymnbooks. Helene said she wasn't very good at speeches, but she knew a hymn that expressed what was in her heart.

"Helene and Enoch began to sing, gently yet confidently:

*My heart is very heavy,
I have carried my own troubles.
My heart had become proud,
but he saved me.
He hears the cry of sinners.*

"As they sang, I gained confidence. I began to tap my foot in time with the music. By the time they hit the third verse, my spirits were lifting:



After Sunday morning v
in Meiganga, Cameroon

*God's love is great,
great indeed.
He has taken my sin away.
I will praise him always,
Because he has saved me
by his grace.*

I was struck by the scene of these people of faith expressing their love and concern for us by singing this hymn of faith and hope.

Later that evening, Maureen and I sat out on the front porch, night all around, some night still in our hearts. We saw the beam of a flashlight as Pastor Benam David arrived for the greeting, 'Peace-thing-to-thing.' Pastor David is another neighbor and a colleague of mine at the Lutheran School.

The Word travels fast. He had heard that Benjamin and our dilemma had come to sit with us and pray for us to recall the promises of God and have strength. He counseled us with a heart (his words translate literally as "to drink courage").

We are the missionaries here, called to preach and teach the Word of God. We are also the ones who are loved and blessed by people of other faiths such as Helene and Enoch and Pastor David."

Maureen and Maureen's story captures the sense of interdependence that is part of global mission today. Mission today is about partnership, churches globally sharing in the good news of Jesus Christ.

We look at mission as a shared endeavor between churches that are different. There are many characteristics to consider as part of the relationship.



Worshippers at a Lutheran Church in Papua, New Guinea.

Giving and Receiving

Many people are still surprised by the gifts that partner churches offer us as North American Christians. Yet those gifts are many. The witness of Salvadoran Lutherans speaks to us of courage in the face of fear and conflict. Namibian Lutherans keep the faith in spite of oppression and continued struggles on the road to independence for their nation.

Such gifts are not only valuable but essential to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as it seeks to live out its faith, ecumenically and inclusively. The resources of partner churches show that while monetary support is very helpful, it is not the only resource of importance.

Learned and Practiced

Models of mission that labeled others as "helpless" and missionaries as "all-knowing" have indeed changed. Today, many African, Asian, and Latin American Christian churches are doing well at carrying out their own mission efforts. In fact it is estimated that by the beginning of the 21st century, Christianity will be the primary religion of the Southern, rather than the Northern, Hemisphere!

Recognition of these facts calls for a shift of our thinking. We are challenged to let go of our old attitudes of being the ones "in control." We realize that we don't make decisions for our partner churches. What's more, we are working in many countries at the invitation of our partner churches.

Today, when North American mission committees convene, we cannot make assumptions about what the rest of the world needs, or about what we have to offer. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America global mission programs emphasize partnership and communication. New associations called "Companion Synod Programs" link ELCA synods with Lutheran churches in places such as Papua New Guinea, Tanzania and Japan. Exchange programs enable congregations to experience the witness of international leaders. Travel study seminars encourage responsible travel and respect for others. Learning interdependence is a process that takes place as we listen to our partner churches.

Combined Energy

We are interdependent with partner churches in carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ. The global village is

in great pain, as any daily paper newscast will tell us. It is only by creating community, and speaking the word of Christ in the global village that we can gain the strength to face the problems. Little by little, working together is becoming a necessity as well as an opportunity.

Through a new program supported by the ELCA, churches in the Southern Hemisphere are building "south-south" relationships to address their needs. For example, doctors from Madagascar are working on hospitals in West Africa. And a mission project has started between Brazil and Mozambique in which Brazilian churches send Christian education materials (in Portuguese) to Mozambique. Future plans for this program include discussions between farmers of both countries.

Shared Dependence on God

Our faith is the common factor that brings us together in praise and concern across borders and cultures. God, through Jesus Christ, sustains us as we work to build and nurture these global relationships.

The word of God touched Stevie and Maureen Nelson in the Central African Republic and bound them to their neighbors. It does the same for our churches as we journey together in Christ Jesus. ■

This article was prepared for Lutheran Woman Today by the Division of Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

QUILTING

the Pieces Together

up cold rises off
ay stairs
re a metal rail
ads to
treuse and
ue,
pink and red,
raps
ing together
the Lutheran Ladies.

a place of flat tables,
folding legs.
workday flurrying to comfort
woman whose mother
as just died.
talk of India, Kenya,
la Lumpur,
the foothills of Kodaikanal.

en I was young
mother made quilts
a pieces a woman living alone
up.
nk she stitched them
r my father as he
ad in the living room.
she may have worked alone.
e the way those quilts held off
early morning fog.

oman retired from teaching
eled overseas with her husband
stant lands.
r were riding a train
ugh India
1 she looked up
saw a quilt from back home
ing on the line.



I don't know how,
but she swore she
recognized it.

It is curious to
come
one day
to do the work of
our Lord
and have it be this
stitching.
One woman lets off

steam about her husband,
retired now and underfoot,
while another
dreams aloud of love,
and making life together good.

The quilts multiply
through Tuesdays of the year,
swelling into packages
with layettes
for mothers and children
across the world,
until they join forty others
cushioning in the mail.

Creeping toward year's end,
two hundred quilts top the record,
stitching in this one's cancer,
that one's laughter,
this one's sorrow,
and that one's arthritis.
Off they go,
taking the same love
my mother once quilted into place
long ago. ■

*Susan Pakenen Holway, Oyster-
ville, Washington, writes that the
"Golden Girls" of Naselle Lutheran
Church (Naselle, Washington) and
their quilting circle were the inspi-
ration for her poem.*

The Lutheran Education Connection

Diane Minor

I love a five-year-old girl named Katie. I cradled her premature body when she was only five days old, and held her hand as she took her first steps. I talk with her about everything from fireworks to family relations.

For a long time, though, I wondered how to talk with Katie about my faith without offending her parents. Though raised in the church, Katie's parents spend most Sunday mornings in the woods at their rural Minnesota lake home. They're not vocally opposed to the church but don't seem convinced of its value, either.

One summer, Katie's parents enrolled her in a preschool sponsored by an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation. Now she sings the Christian songs she's learned there. Now I struggle less to find words for what is deep and meaningful.

Her parents accept her exposure to Christian ideas and values. They appreciate the safe, loving care and quality education her Lutheran preschool provides.

Ministry to Children

More than one in ten ELCA congregations sponsor preschool, infant care, day-care or after-school programs, touching the lives of an estimated 60,000 children a year. Some 140 ELCA congregations sponsor el-

ementary or secondary schools which enroll an estimated 30,000 students a year.

Two-thirds of the students in ELCA schools are from families who do not attend church or are not Lutheran, according to Billie Navarro, ELCA Director for Schools. She says similar figures are not available for preschools because those schools are developing at such a rapid rate.

The preschools and schools sponsored by ELCA congregations generally offer worship and religious instruction, says Navarro. Sherrill Korshavn, principal of Trinity Lutheran School and Preschool in the Los Angeles area, says that "What really makes us Christian is what happens in the classroom that is religious education or chapel. How conflicts are managed, and Christian life-styles are modeled.

Outreach to the Community

Research suggests that church-sponsored schools only assist the development of children when accompanied by religious commitment on the part of parents, other significant adults and, possibly, peers.

ELCA schools and preschools strengthen or inspire the religious commitment of a student's parents. Congregations with schools or preschools report up to four times as many adult baptisms than congregations without them. "Three-year-olds

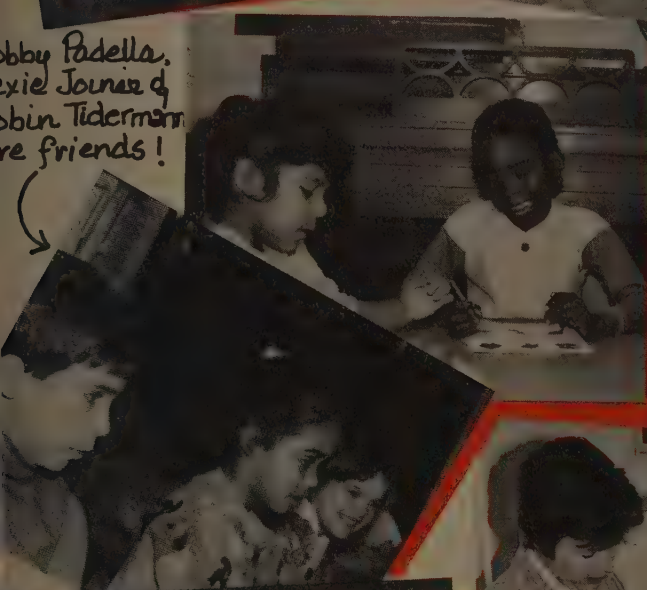
this is my friend, Katie ♥
PRE-SCHOOL ~ Minneapolis



OUR PICTURES FROM
LUTHERAN SCHOOL



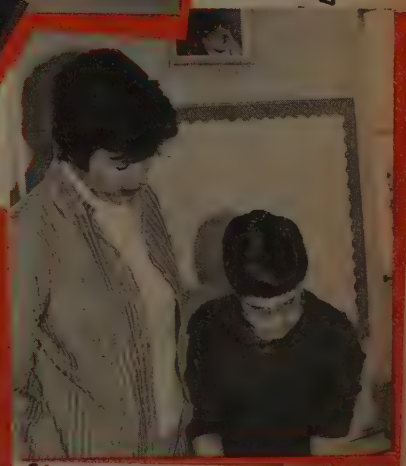
Robby Padella,
Lexie Jounie &
Robin Tidemann
are friends!



Robert Rodriguez
looks happy!

KINDERGARTEN

Lizette Mendoza
& Brian Booker
do nice work
at Prince of Peace
Lutheran School
in Chicago.



Billy Piechowski with the
teacher Linda McDowell

Jesse Mendoza & Edward
Benitez in 5th Grade.





Pre-school is fun at
Pilgrim Lutheran School
in Chicago. ☺

our best evangelists," says Dr. Delbert Schulz, longtime Lutheran school educator and member of the board of the ELCA's Division for Education.

Schulz and others recount story after story of children who spark or renew Christian faith in their families. Some congregations have joint evangelism programs with schools or preschools.

"We would not be making it financially or otherwise without the school," says the Rev. Gary Erickson, pastor of Medill Avenue Lutheran Church. The church houses part of Prince of Peace Lutheran School on Chicago's West Side. "Three out of four of our new members have some connection with the school."

Five Chicago-area congregations started Prince of Peace School. "They

were looking for some way to serve the community," says Cynde Kuck, former principal there who now works with schools and preschools at synod and churchwide levels.

Those congregations didn't have far to look for a way to serve the community. Just blocks away are huge public schools with 50 children crowded in classrooms built for 20.

The existence of ELCA schools is not an indictment of public education. Many ELCA schools cooperate closely with public schools, and the Division for Education churchwide board is on record in support of public schools. Director Billie Navar spent much of her career as a public schools educator and official.

Inclusiveness

While some recent research suggests church-sponsored schools may be attracting an increasing number of White children from middle-class families, nearly the opposite is true for many ELCA schools.

ELCA schools are accessible to low-income families because tuition is kept low and scholarships are available. Roughly one-third of students are children whose primary language is other than English, whose race is other than White.

"Families call and ask, 'Do you have any Black children?'" says Lynn Vaicunas, principal at Chicago's Prince of Peace. "We say, 'Yes, we do, and we're really proud of it. We're trying to build that up.'"

Such patterns may not yet be in place among most of the ELCA's early childhood programs. Because most preschool programs are sponsored by suburban congregations, they often are not accessible to low-income families in urban or rural areas.

terdependence

schools and preschools are the place where women are care-givers to other women who work," says the Rev. Stephen Bouman, a Division for Education board member who founded the school sponsored by the church that serves in Bogota, New Jersey.

In Bouman's congregation and others, retired women and men tutor children. Schools often return such intergenerational favors by taking the children to visit elderly people at nursing homes.

Many schools and preschools also have reciprocal relationships with congregational women's groups. The groups provide financial backing and volunteer help. The schools send children's choirs and guest speakers to regional gatherings.

The largest group of women supporting the preschools and schools are the teachers themselves, many of whom are members of ELCA congregations. They give generously of their time and talents, and receive salaries far lower than they would in public schools.

An endowment fund to help new teachers pay off their college debts has received relatively few contributions so far, according to Harvey Remoeller, director of the ELCA Foundation.

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onwide, child care is available to one in four children from the families who need it, according to Susan Rees of the Coalition on Human Needs in Washington, D.C.

Constituent support is crucial to the new laws reflecting the ELCA's central position supporting quality, affordable child-care for low-income families, says Marian Nickelson,

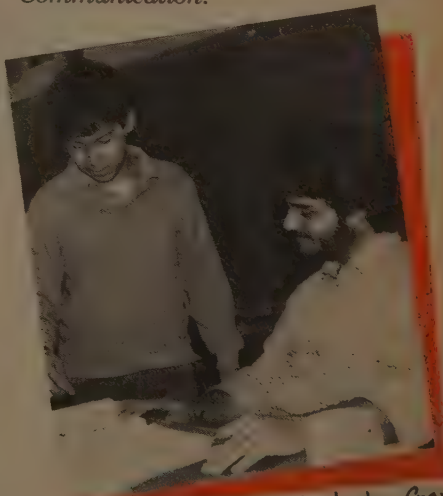
who represents the ELCA's Commission for Women in the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, Washington, D.C.

Creative solutions backed with financial support also are needed to establish these programs and to train and retain teachers for existing programs. The annual turnover rate for teachers in Lutheran preschools mirrors the secular pattern at roughly 40 percent, notes Sue Ko of Irvine, California, director of the ELCA's largest preschool.

Now congregations need to renew their commitment to ELCA preschools and schools with active financial, time and prayer support.

As Billie Navarro points out, "Lutherans have a strong tradition of education which dates back to the 17th century and will help shape the leaders of the 21st century." ■

Diane Minor, Oak Park, Illinois, is an associate director for interpretation for the ELCA's Commission for Communication.



Omar A. Quiñones gets help from 6th grade teacher, Preston Meyers.

The Well-Loved Bible

Mary Ann Bahe



With my Bible before me I begin to prepare for another Bible study. The two of us have been through years of study together. The sight of my Bible raises a few eyebrows sometimes, because on its front and back covers are stickers—stickers from the women's themes for the past years. At last count, there were nine. I remember some of them well: "People of God," "Women of Spirit," "Blessed for the Journey," and now the sticker for the Women of the ELCA logo.

Those stickers bring back memories of making banners with those same symbols. The banners hung as visual reminders during the year; I miss them.

As I open my Bible and turn the pages, I wonder what others think when

**A Bible
with
markings
and
dog-eared
corners is
far more
valuable
than one
whose
pages
are shiny
and
clean.**

they see my markings on those pages—large sections that are underlined, notations written in the margins. To me, they are reminders of meaningful Bible studies. To me, a Bible with markings and dog-eared corners is more valuable than one whose pages are shiny and clean.

"I have complete confidence in the gospel; in God's power to save who believe, first Jews and also the Gentiles. For the gospel reveals how God puts people right with himself is through faith from beginning to end. As Scripture says, 'The son who is put right with God through faith shall live,' " (Romans 1:16 TEV). This text is underlined in red in my Bible. At the top of the column is the notation "Al theme verse—1980!"

**Bible
studies
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but their
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women's
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stays
constant.**

Acts 1:8 is underlined with the notation "84—LCW." There isn't as much marking in my Old Testament as there is in the New Testament. However, Jeremiah 24:6-7 is underlined, as it was the LCW theme verse in 1987. I remember how that seemed to be a more difficult study, probably because I don't have a strong Old Testament background. I knew very little about the book of Esther, but the study of Esther (August 1985) helped me understand the problems of that time.

At our group Bible studies, we often compare different versions of the Bible. There are some whose entire spiritual life has been grounded in the King James version, and that is meaningful for them. For monthly studies of the Revised Standard Version, and this has value. My Bible

today's English Version, because it's easier for me to understand. I maintain it isn't the version that is important. It's the message of God that is.

I have at times struggled with some of our Bible studies. In preparation for group Bible study, I do some reading and thinking beforehand and often find myself unable to relate the thinking of the writer of

the study, but I persevere. Stewardship of time and money is also a concern of mine. As a time guideline, the length of a study should, I think, generally be kept within an hour. If a group can't cover the printed material in an hour, it can lead to frustration for some people. I would also like to see pertinent background material included in the printed Bible study, so purchasing an additional book is unnecessary.

I study my Bible alone in times of quiet, but I also study my Bible with others. Some of the greatest blessings of Bible study have been the shared insights of other people.

Bible studies change through the years, but their place at the heart of the women's organization stays constant.

Mary Ann Bahe, a wife, mother, and grandmother of three, lives in New Leipzig, North Dakota. A member of the Congregational Life board for the North Dakota Synod, she also is an active Christian education volunteer in her parish.

We Seek You Through Your Word

Marlene Park



I have memories of our dining-room table, under the light of the gooseneck lamp, where Mom would spread her Bible and Halley's Commentary. My siblings and I were in our places, in the fringe of the light, working on our Sunday school lessons.

On one particular evening I recall reading the memory verse from the Bible, rather than from my lesson book. Unlike the study book, my King James Version did not shorten the verse for young readers. That discovery was exciting. I was challenged, as I would be many times in my life, to see what new things the Bible held in store for me when I opened myself up to it.

I also have memories of the early 60s when a new women's organization was forming at church. Again my mother played a key role. She invited me to go with her to the new circle. I recall the women were nervous about leading and participating in Bible study. Somehow, what they did on Sundays with Bibles and com-

mentaries seemed unrelated, at first to what they were being asked to do now. In their previous organizations they had used readings, rather than Bible study. So the experience was new, scary and exhilarating.

The next year I arrived in rural northern Wisconsin, where I joined a circle, learning with and from farm wives, a schoolteacher, a postal clerk and a hairdresser. The journey was a Bible study that had begun with the lessons completed on the dining room table continued to take down all kinds of paths.

Whether in circles, at camp, workshops or seminars, or at district, synodical or national meetings, I found that Bible studies stretched my mind, challenged me, often affirmed my ideas, and enlarged my understanding of who I am as a child of God. Together with homemakers, college professors, interior decorators, audiovisual experts, assembly line workers and a host of others I learned to recognize the importance of faith as the foundation on which

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ed biblical under-
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e, and of politics.
learned of, and

our global sisters. We reflected
enically on stewardship and
stry in daily life with Presbyte-
and Roman Catholics.

Bible study we delved into the
nets. We struggled to honor the

commitments we had
made in worship, es-
pecially by working for
justice for all people.
Our study often com-
pelled us to speech and
action. We came to
grasp the connection
between evangelism
and social action.

Finally, through Bi-
ble study we became
increasingly aware
that the more we read
and studied, the more
there was to read and
study. Just as when I
travel a familiar road, I
see ever-new sights, so
in Bible study I find
ever-new insights in
passages of Scripture I
thought I knew. Not all
roads are built for com-
fort and speed, nor are
all Bible studies writ-
ten to be handled easily
or comfortably. But in
each, there is a lesson
to be learned. I've been
thankful for the many
lessons I've learned.

Lord, bless us on our
journey as we seek you
through your word. ■

*Marlene Park is a Women of the
ELCA churchwide board member
from Rockford, Illinois. She uses her
teaching, speaking and writing tal-
ents to serve the women's organiza-
tion and broader church.*

A Light to My Path: A Study of the Gospel of John

"Ah, you remind me of your mother!"

Under the right circumstances, these words express esteem and affection. For as different as our lives may be from the lives of our parents, we owe to them much of the shape of our lives, our physical features, and, to some extent, our personalities. Despite the significant and sometimes intentional changes between generations, there is continuity. We are different chapters in one family story.

The same might be said of the Bible study in Lutheran Woman Today for 1989. The year began with eight sessions on the Psalms, with the theme "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). The last four sessions for this year are on the theme of light in the gospel of John. As different as the Fourth Gospel is from the Psalms, there is continuity. In the Psalms study, God's Word (the Scriptures) is the light to our path. In the John study, we meet the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ. He is the light that shines in the darkness, the light no darkness can overcome (John 1:5). These four sessions on light in John invite us to explore and experience anew some of the most powerful words in the Bible:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

The Scriptures in this study continue to be a light to our path, pointing us to Jesus, God with us.

One Who Came by Night

Study Text: John 3:1-21

Nancy and Craig Koester

nnis

Glynnis had gone to the seaside only once or twice since her husband's death three years ago. It was too early for her, remembering how much Ben had loved the beach and how he was not there to share it with her. But today, following a quiet impulse, she drove the car to the beach, parked in the public lot, and walked across the sand toward the water's edge. The sea seemed quiet today; it was low tide. It was too early for the crowds of sun worshipers, but a few beachcombers were already out searching for shells.

Sitting down on her old beach towel, Glynnis watched the seagulls dive for minnows and heard their wing cries pierce the air.

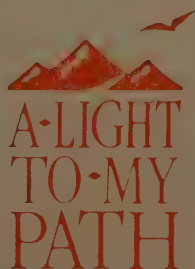
Something has changed, she thought. It doesn't hurt much. The first year after Ben had been the worst. The second year a little better. But now she felt stronger

and more whole. When had it happened? She thought of Jesus' saying, "You must be born anew." Can one be born anew after grief? Yes. Perhaps even *through* grief. Slowly.

How did Glynnis experience light and darkness in her life? In what sense did she experience new birth? What is your story of light and darkness? Of new birth?

Images of light and darkness appear throughout the gospel of John. As the story begins, we hear that through God's all-creating Word "the light shines in the darkness" (1:5). Later, Jesus announces, "I am the light of the world" (8:12). Some accepted Jesus, but many others "loved

darkness rather than light" (3:19). Yet throughout his ministry Jesus promised, "I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (12:46).



Light and Darkness

1 John 3:1 tells us that Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. Why do you think this “ruler of the Jews” came to Jesus “by night”? What are some ways in which people today might try to come to Jesus “by night”? (For example, when parents drop their children off at Sunday school but never attend worship, or when persons seek truth in religious experience but avoid any contact with the church.)

■ Note that in 3:2, Nicodemus begins the conversation with Jesus in a matter-of-fact way. But in 3:3, Jesus immediately moves the conversation to a higher level. Jesus uses the Greek word *anōthen* to describe the new birth. The word *anōthen* can mean either “a second time” or “from above.” In the Revised Standard Version, *anōthen* is translated as “born anew.”

2 Judging from 3:4, how well do you think Nicodemus understood Jesus’ use of the expression “born anew”? How does Nicodemus’s understanding differ from what Jesus says in 3:5?

3 How do people today understand the phrase “born anew” or “born again”? Do you find the statement “You must be born anew” comforting or disturbing? Does it unite Christians or divide them? Reflect on how you have experienced this in your personal life, in your family, or in your congregation.

4 In 3:5-8 Jesus uses the Greek word *pneuma* which can mean “spirit” or “wind.” By using both meanings of the word, Jesus describes the freedom of God’s spirit. Although Jesus’ insistence that one must be “born anew” can sound like a demand, 3:8 makes it clear that new birth occurs by the spirit of God. The spirit’s activity is beyond human control. How does 3:8 help us understand what it means to be born anew?

One need not be a Christian to sense a need to be born again." What are some of the nonreligious ways that people seek rebirth and renewal? (For example, through career change, dieting, or travel.) What are the benefits of such experiences? What are the limitations?

Read John 3:5-6. In 3:5 Jesus says that one is born of water and the Spirit. John, the evangelist, says that baptism with water was practiced by John the Baptist (26-27, 33) and by Jesus' own disciples (4:1-2). Jesus, however, brings the added gift of God's spirit. What does this suggest about the relationship between baptism and new birth?

Recall that in 3:2, Nicodemus appeared to know something about Jesus. But by verse 9 and 10 it is clear that Nicodemus does not understand what Jesus is saying. What clues does verse 2 give us for Nicodemus's failure to understand Jesus? What misunderstandings of Jesus might keep people from following him in our time?

Compare Nicodemus's story with that of the woman at the well, found in John 4:7-30. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. The woman met Jesus in broad daylight, "about the sixth hour," which was noontime (4:6). What is Nicodemus's standing in the community (3:1)? What is the woman's standing in the community (4:18)? The first thing that Nicodemus says in Chapter 3 is a question (3:9). The last thing that the woman says also is a question (4:29). How would you describe the differences between the woman's response and Nicodemus's response?

Earthly and Heavenly Things

Read John 3:11-15.

In these verses, Jesus talks about belief and unbelief—issues that affect people in every generation. Jesus speaks both for himself and his followers by saying, "We speak of what we know" (3:11). Jesus also uses words that are plural in Greek to address Nicodemus and people like him. We can paraphrase John 3:11b as "you people do not receive our testimony." The conversation in these verses does not concern Jesus and Nicodemus alone. It becomes a conversation between all those



who believe and those who do not.

We noted earlier that people in Jerusalem saw Jesus do signs, but did not really understand what the signs pointed to (2:23-25). In Chapter 3, Jesus uses earthly images like birth and wind to speak of God's actions. In 3:12 Jesus indicates that those who do not understand such "earthly things" will not be convinced by a more direct account of "heavenly things." In this complex passage, Jesus offers a preview of his life, death and mission. The constant theme is that we are born anew through Christ.

9 In John 3:14-15, Jesus refers to an incident that took place in the time of Moses. Read Numbers 21:4-9. Unbelief was not new in Jesus' time. What does this story tell us about the people of Israel in the time of Moses? What is the significance of the serpent on the pole? How does this Old Testament story help us to understand the significance of Jesus' death?

10 Read John 3:14-15 again. In this passage Jesus uses the Greek expression "lift up," which can have two meanings. First, it can mean to be "lifted up" by being hung on a cross. Second, it can mean to be "exalted" or "lifted up in a glorious way." Note how "lifted up" is used in 8:28 and 12:32. How do the two meanings of this expression help convey the significance of Jesus' death?



Darkness and Light

Read John 3:16-21.

Review Psalm 104, which was the Bible basis for last month's study. The psalm testifies that the world is God's good creation. In John's gospel, the term *world* is sometimes used for a creation, as in 1:10a, 3:16 or 17:24. But more often, John uses *world* to describe the world in rebellion against God.

11 What characteristics of "the world" appear in the following passages from John: 1:10b, 14:27, 15:18-19? Note that in 3:16-17, the world is the object of God's love. How does an understanding of the term *world*, as used in John's gospel, help us to understand the character of God's love?

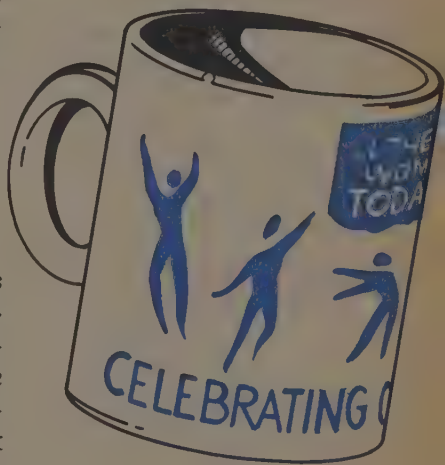
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- ☐ Godchild
- ☐ Prayer Partner
- ☐ Big print for Aunt Ida
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- ☐ Jen at home with new baby
- ☐ Gift for hospital waiting room
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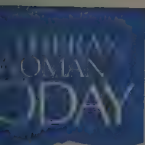
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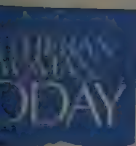


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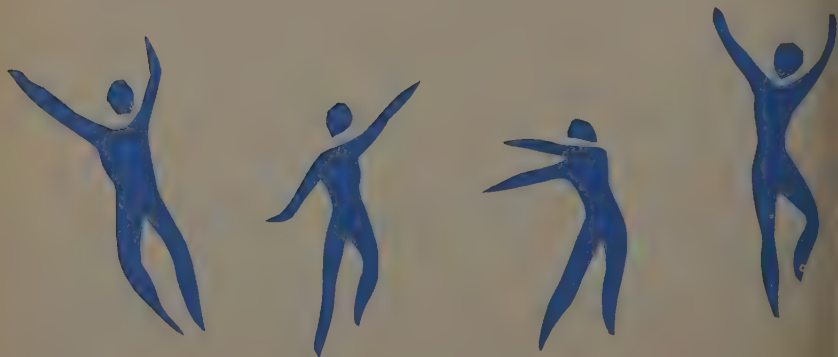
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“LWT focuses on the challenges, joys, and struggles we all face as Christian women in today's world.”

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Lutheran Woman Today—Celebrating God's Creation

2 In John 3:16-21, there are many pairs of opposite words and ideas, for example, those who believe, and those who do not believe. What other pairs of opposites can you find?

3 Read John 3:16-21 again and note how, in this passage, judgment and love are intertwined. Which verses in this passage usually receive the greatest emphasis in Christian life? Why?

4 John 3:17 clearly says that Jesus came to save the world, not to condemn it. John 3:18 suggests that people condemn themselves by their response to Jesus. In what ways do people today judge or condemn themselves? What difference could faith make in the lives of such persons?

5 Recall that in Psalm 104:19-20, light and darkness are simply part of God's created order. But what is meant by the words *light* and *darkness* in John 3:19? Think of several ways in which we experience light and darkness.

6 Think of examples from your own experience or current events that illustrate John 3:20. In what situations do people hide so that their deeds will not be judged?

7 Think of someone whose deeds "have been wrought in secret" (3:21). How do such people provide light and guidance for others?

8 How well does the imagery in 3:19-21 describe Nicodemus? Has he seen a glimmer of the light in this passage? Is he completely in the dark? Or is he in the shadows between darkness and light?

19

Nicodemus's story does not end in Chapter 3. Read John 7:45-52 and 19:38-42 (where we are reminded that Nicodemus first came to Jesus "by night"). How would you describe the way in which Nicodemus's response to Jesus develops in these passages?

20

How can we know whether people we encounter are "of the darkness" or "of the light"? When might we be called upon to make such a judgment, and when should we refrain from judgment?

■ In John 3 we, like Nicodemus, hear that people can be born anew through the power of God's spirit. We hear that the light of Christ has come into the world, and that light brings us life. We may experience this as a dramatic event, such as a conversion, or as daily trust and hope as we live out our Baptism.

In Closing

Read or listen as John 3:16-17 is read aloud. Think of the words as the light that guides our lives.

Worship

Almighty God, by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, you turn us from the old life of sin. Grant that we who are reborn to new life in him may live in righteousness and holiness all our days, through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer for Renewal from page 47 of Lutheran Book of Worship, copyright © 1978.

Looking Ahead

To prepare for the next session, read John, Chapters 8 and 9. Think about what it means to receive spiritual sight. ■

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The Teacher as Learner

Myra L. Fozard

I do we teach? Oh, no! I don't know enough about the Bible to do that."

Too often those who recruit teachers for Sunday school or vacation Bible school hear those words.

For some reason most Christians feel they have to know everything—or almost everything—about the Bible before they teach. They often feel inadequate and afraid of making a mistake. In some ways this feeling is commendable, because it shows they realize the importance of the learning ministry of the church and the influence teachers have on the lives of others. But what people don't realize is this: no one ever knows it all; no one ever knows everything. We are all learners.

It has often been said that teachers learn more than their pupils, and that statement is true. As teachers learn many things. Here are a few:

1. We learn about our students. Who are they? What are their needs and expectations? What are the characteristics of their age level? Is

there some information about their home situations that can help us as teachers be more sensitive to their needs? Knowing the answers to such questions can help guide us as we teach.

2. We learn more about ourselves and where we are on our faith journey. As we teach, we share our faith stories as well as impart facts. Learning the factual content of the Bible is important, but it is not enough. Many people who can quote Scripture, giving chapter and verse, can lose sight of the gospel message, or of how God would have us live with and for other people. As teachers, we learn how important it is to share ourselves and God's influence in our lives with those we teach.

3. We learn about the Bible and church doctrine. Leader guides and other books provide background information and give new perspectives and ideas. We not only learn more about individual Bible stories, but we also deepen our understanding of God's saving grace throughout his-

tory. We learn what it means to be a Lutheran Christian.

4. We learn about teaching methods. There may be several ways to present the same lesson, but some methods will work better with a particular group than others. Discussion may work well for one situation; another time storytelling, drawing, role-play or video may work best. Because we know our group's abilities and limitations, we will be able to present the material in the most effective manner—a process that will take some experimentation.

5. We learn to find and use the appropriate resources. The materials available are many and varied and might include the Bible, a leader guide, a resource supplement, a concordance, a Bible dictionary, a commentary, or recommended books and magazine articles. It makes sense for Lutheran congregations to use Lutheran materials which interpret Scripture, the sacraments and

the creeds in light of Lutheran doctrine.

6. We learn the importance of being a good example. Those we teach will see in us what it means to belong to the family of God. One example of our demonstrated faith might be in group prayers. Because we pray corporately, the group will learn better how to pray. Our lives in and out of the classroom will influence those we teach.

7. We learn to trust the Holy Spirit. It is our responsibility as teachers to prepare our lessons and then trust the Spirit to lead us to do the right things, those things which our students most need to hear. Prayers for guidance before preparation and before each class will enable us to do our best—that is what God asks of us.

8. Most important, as teachers we can develop our learning attitude. Our efforts to grow with those



leads us to expand our knowledge and enhance our faith. As learners, we come to think of ourselves as learners, not experts.

The day when I visited my 91-year-old grandmother, Lucinda, I found her reading the *Book of Concord*, the volume which contains the confessions of the Lutheran church, including the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Small and Large Catechism, and Formula of Concord. "There's a learning in this here book," she told me.

Such was heavy reading for a woman with a sixth-grade education, but, as she had never stopped learning. Most of her life was lived in a valley between two western Pennsylvania hills, but she expanded her horizons by reading and taking advantage of every learning opportunity

her congregation offered. She knew her Bible and her church doctrine, and she shared her faith with everyone. She was a marvelous teacher.

Let us never be afraid to accept God's call to teach, because God has given each of us the capacity to learn as well. Let us take the risk and accept the challenge. What a marvelous way to share the good news of what God has done, and continues to do, for us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. ■

Myra L. Fozard, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, calls Christian education one of her loves. She served for a number of years on her synod's educational ministry team and as a Sunday school teacher, in addition to writing Lutheran curricular materials.

..... SELF CARE

.....
ULA BURTNESS, MARY JOHNSON AND KEITH SEHNERT

How and Whys of Illness

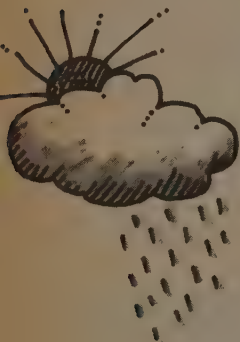
There is growing evidence today that our attitudes, perceptions and beliefs profoundly affect the health of our bodies. For some, this is a difficult idea to accept, because it suggests that we must accept a certain amount of responsibility for our own illnesses. Illness today is viewed more and

more as having many causes. We are not just helpless victims in a world full of germs; nor are we totally victimized by stress. For we have something to say about how we respond to germs, stresses and other difficulties. We can make choices on how to live our lives and choices about how we respond to the events of our lives.

These choices can influence how we feel, which then influences how we choose to behave.

"A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones" (Proverbs 17:22) speaks to the importance of a positive attitude to life and health. Certainly there are days when "a cheerful heart" is hard to come by. Yet the proverb does not say "be everlastingly cheerful." It's simply stating a truth that the wise proverb writer gleaned from experience.

Think about your own life for a moment. What happens when you really make the effort to act in a cheerful way? Often others begin to



What separates the person who sees only the cloud from the one who looks for the silver lining?

mirror your behavior and before long you aren't just acting anymore. Cheerfulness can be contagious. Cheerfulness and laughter not only bind people together in hope and love, but some medical researchers suggest that they enhance our immune system and releases endorphins—nature's painkillers—into the bloodstream.

When Jesus healed the woman of dysmenorrhea (Luke 8:43-48), the man who was paralyzed (Luke 5:17-26), and the man with leprosy (Luke 5:12-14), he said it was their faith that made them well. The people

that Jesus healed reached out to him with courage and faith, and their action brought them wonderful benefits. They were active on their own behalf; they took the leap of faith.

Our beliefs and assumptions have a profound effect on how we see the world in relation to ourselves. We may choose to look at life as very difficult and unfair most of the time, or we can choose to see it as a daring adventure, filled with opportunities that may not always turn out the way we want them to. We can continue to cry, "Why me, Lord?" or learn to pray, "Now what?" We can focus on a disability or an ability.

What separates the person who sees only the cloud from the one who looks for the silver lining? Author Bob Veninga in his book, *A Gift of Hope: How to Survive Our Tragedies*, (Liberty Brown and Co., 1985) points out that there is a reservoir of hope within each one of us. This hope is basic to our existence. It is this hope that sees the present moment as being alive with possibilities no matter what the circumstances.

It is not what happens to us that matters as much as how we choose to respond to it. We must do the very best we can with our life situation, and leave the outcome up to God.

Things will happen to us; illness will occur. We can choose, however, to live a God-pleasing life that embraces health. We can grow and leap in faith as we respond to what happens to us. We can praise God in health, and in our vulnerable illness. We can accept responsibility for our lives, leaving God in control. ■

INTO THE LIGHT

BRaille AND TAPE SERVICE KEEPS READERS INFORMED

Ann E. Hafften

JOY RELTON'S LIFE IS FULL. She passed the bar exam in July, and hopes to specialize in disability law. She and her husband, a teacher, live in the Washington, D.C. area with their one-year-old daughter, Rebecca. Involved in her Lutheran congregation, she is a dedicated member of *The Lutheran* and *Lutheran Woman Today*. Because Joy is blind, the ELCA periodicals arrive on audiotape.

"I use these publications exactly as sighted people do," Joy says. "To me, it's reading a magazine whether I listen while commuting by subway or as I do housework." Joy has been receiving Braille and cassette-tape editions of Lutheran publications for more than a year now through the ELCA Braille and Tape Service and before that for seven years through Ephraim Services of the former American Lutheran Church. *Christ in Our Hands*, a daily devotional magazine, is also available on tape.

"The Bible study portion of *Lutheran Woman Today* enables readers to think for themselves," Joy says. She is quick to point out the importance of receiving the study's leader in Braille. "When it is my turn to lead the Bible study I'm equipped, and so is any other woman in the congregation."

Joy considers her reading of the Lutheran periodicals nothing extraordinary. She wants to be in-

formed. It is necessary, she feels, that blind people (and those with other disabling conditions) receive the same information as every other member of the church in a form that is usable to them. "Things are not always more difficult for us, as people believe. With the same information we can be equal members; we will simply do things differently."

Joy serves on a committee that is rewriting her congregation's constitution. She is able to participate fully since receiving an audiotape of the *ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations* through the Braille and Tape Service.



Lutheran Woman Today's Braille edition and audiotapes.

The majority of blind people lose their vision after age 60 and, therefore, never learn braille.

Active in the worship life of her church, Joy wishes she had a complete *Lutheran Book of Worship* (the braille edition is abridged). When Rebecca was to be baptized, Joy was unable to read the order of service. She was not aware she could request

hearing or that all are musically talented."

At least six million U.S. citizens are known to be blind, though many more are reluctant to admit they have a disabling condition. Of the six million, only one percent read braille. Joy Relton feels that learning braille is not adequately emphasized in primary education. She is hopeful that computer braille translation will soon become more affordable.

Relton says the majority of people lose their vision after age 60 and, therefore, never learned braille. Diabetes, a primary cause of blindness, often reduces sensitivity in fingertips. All these barriers to the use of braille point up the importance of audiotape services, such as the ELCA's Braille and Tape Service and the U.S. Library of Congress, which offers an extensive listing of publications available on audiotapes.

Lutheran Woman Today on audiotape helps keep Joy in contact with world issues as they relate to Christian faith. Other publications such as *World Encounter*, *World Season*, and *Parish Teacher*, can be provided by special request. As Rebecca grows, Joy is beginning a search for children's materials in braille, especially books about the meaning of Christian life, that can be read together.

Currently 750 people regularly receive *Lutheran Woman Today* on audiotape; 150 receive the braille edition. An individual with a disabling condition can receive the magazine on audiotape for \$10.00 per year, thanks to volunteer readers and a system of recording cassettes. Which raises a question

LWT's big print edition (shown alongside the regular edition) and audiotapes help people with visual impairments to be informed.

the missing portions on separate braille sheets through the Braille and Tape Service. "Of course there are limits of time and money," Joy says, "but I wish we had some of the folk services and worship alternatives in braille.

"Wherever I've been active in a congregation, I've always volunteered to read the lessons," Joy adds, "but I'm seldom asked." Worship is just one of many areas where blind people run into stereotypes and myths about their condition. "People seem to think blind people are unaware of what's going on around them," Joy says, "or else they have ideas that blind people have extra

Are there really only 900 Lutheran women that could benefit from the audiocassette service?

Are there really only 900 Lutheran women that could benefit from this service?

My Relton speculates that pastors and concerned friends in congregations simply are not aware of the limitations of many members. It is very important for more people to know about and use the Braille Tape Service, so more people will find out about it," she says.

My suggests making general announcements about the service to the whole congregation. Another possibility would be for congregational

leaders or pastors to alert nursing homes to the availability of Lutheran audio publications.

To receive a complete list of materials available through the ELCA Braille and Tape Service, write to: Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440, or phone 1-800-328-4648. ■

Ann Hafften is a free-lance writer who also works for Lutheran Peace Fellowship in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She formerly worked in the communication office of the American Lutheran Church.

SEEDLINGS

ONE WOMAN'S HUNCH LEADS TO A SIGNIFICANT MINISTRY

Bonnie Belasic

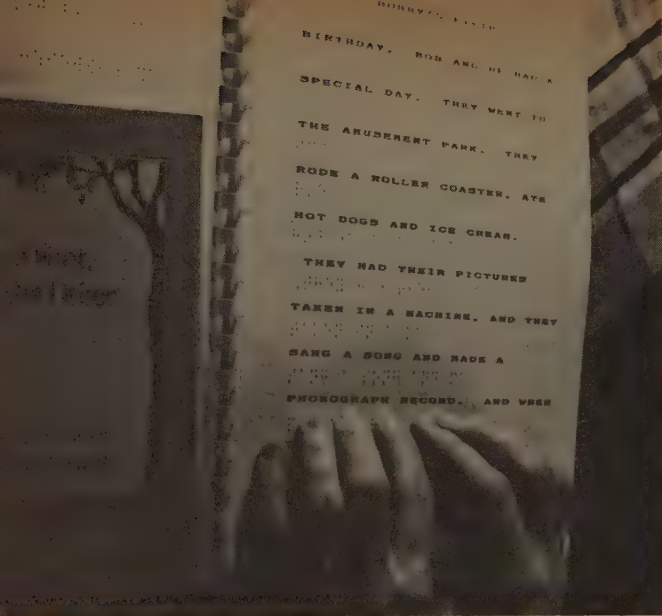
Seedlings Braille Books for Children. I'm out digging up some good books."

A message on Debra Bonde's telephone answering machine does more than tell us Bonde is blind. It is a statement of her commitment to providing affordable books to children who are visually impaired, and it reflects a change in her life.

Though this self-professed "not very outgoing, socially oriented" woman would have preferred a less public way to live out her daily life, she is now on the speakers' circuit, seeking grants and sharing her vision and excitement for the ministry to visually impaired children through her book business.



Debra Bonde



Books like this with both print and braille enable those who are sighted to read together. These books are especially helpful for families with preschool children.

"I had a gut feeling this was important," Bonde said. She knew that only 20 percent of all children with visual impairments were proficient in braille, and she connected that knowledge with the fact that few affordable braille books were available to them. Unemployment, she found, runs at 80 percent among those with visual impairment. She surmises that braille literacy could help change that statistic.

Operating out of the basement workshop in her home, Bonde relies on women volunteers from her church for help with this ministry. In fact, it was her Women of the ELCA circle that critiqued her first speech and sent her on her way in search of grants and other funding. Today she is able to provide braille books at half her production costs with the help of grant funding and volunteer support for Seedlings.

Bonde is representative of the three mission areas (community, growth and action) under which Women of the ELCA programs are carried out. ■

From ELCA VOICES, 1989 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Resource Packet for Congregations. Used by permission.

The work of Debra Bonde is representative of the three mission areas under which Women of the ELCA programs are carried out.

Bonnie Belasic is director for communications and stewardship interpretation for Women of the ELCA. This article first appeared as part of a interpretive packet produced by the ELCA Commission for Communication and distributed at this year's ELCA synod assemblies.

ABOUT WOMEN

JANE BURTON

Claire Randall

*vision CWU as an instrument
t enables women to confront
e issues of our time that are
al, complex and interrelated."*

l women should reach out, use
talents and demand the most
emselves." These are the words
e Randall, national president of
ch Women United, applies to
elf in her global ecumenical min-
s.

aire Randall became the 14th
dent of CWU in June 1988,
ing with her a mosaic of nation-
nd international experiences.
and reared in Texas, she began
career as an artist and Christian
ator within the Presbyterian
h. She then served for more
a decade on the national staff
urch Women United in various
ons before becoming the first
an to be selected General Sec-
y of the National Council of
ches—a position she held for 11
and from which she retired in

ire Randall has traveled the
over. She has met and talked
presidents and prime minis-
urbishops and popes. On a re-
rip to the USSR, Randall met



with Mikhail Gorbachev and leaders
of the Russian Orthodox Church. Al-
ways her goal has been to use her
unique position to listen, build
bridges and promote peace.

"Now, as president of Church
Women United," she reflects, "I feel
I have come full circle ecumenically.
As I look ahead to our jubilee in 1991
and to the 21st century, I envision
CWU as an instrument that enables
women to confront the life and death
issues of our time that are global,
complex and interrelated. World-
wide poverty, the ozone hole, the
greenhouse effect and nuclear-acc-
ident fallout touch us all. Through
Moses, God has put before us life and
death and called us to choose life
(Deuteronomy 30:19). It is time for
us as women of the church to choose
life and to demand of ourselves the
collective effort it will take to impact
the whole world with the power of
our influence and our message."

"I feel I have come full circle ecumenically."

"The people of Central America taught me faithful persistence in the face of overwhelming odds."

Patricia J. Rumer

"My vision is for CWU to be seen and recognized by women in all denominations as an exciting and active arena where they can experience the spiritual exhilaration of collective power..."

Patricia Rumer is a woman who smiles easily and considers laughter as essential to her life as the air she breathes. "I feel where there is laughter, there is hope," she says.

The daughter of a Presbyterian minister, Patricia Rumer grew up in the church. "My father believed there wasn't anything a girl couldn't do. He gave me the gift of confidence in myself—to try, to dream and to live out those dreams."

A dynamic woman with clear goals for her life, Rumer works to integrate and balance her personal and professional life as a woman, single parent of a teenage daughter and church executive. An avid athlete, she enjoys bicycling and swimming. She's quick to credit the women who have supported her, including her mother and a host of women friends with whom she has dreamed, laughed, and journeyed.

Rumer holds a Ph.D. in urban studies and policy analysis from Portland State University. She gained practical experience as well as spiritual growth living and working for several years in Guatemala



as a community development worker. Rumer commented, "The people of Central America taught me faithful persistence in the face of overwhelming odds."

For the past seven years, Rumer has been the regional secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean with the United Church of Christ Board of World Ministries. In April, she succeeds Doris Anne Young as the new General Director of Christian Women United. She sees her challenge with CWU as working to motivate and empower a more vibrant community of women of faith within the church. "My vision," she says, is for CWU to be seen and recognized by women in all denominations as an exciting and active arena where they can experience the spiritual exhilaration of collective power as they celebrate, worship and join together in common action. Now is the moment for CWU to be a catalyst during the Decade for Church Solidarity with Women." ■

goal for today, as every day, is to share the 'so much' that I have been given."

Margaret Schiffert

"I have given you so much. Now you must share it."

These are the words Margaret Schiffert, the daughter of a Methodist pastor, remembers the most from her childhood. In her family talents were shared, something "which you didn't dare keep to yourself." Margaret's gift for writing and illustrating became prominent early on.

Now Schiffert is editor, primary writer, photojournalist, production and technical editor "and often typographer" of *Churchwoman*, a quarterly publication of Church Women United.

Schiffert's preparation for her work on *Churchwoman* has included various jobs in high school and college—free-lance writing during off hours from her jobs as medical artist, costume designer and high school teacher; the mothering of five children; and positions "in a succession of national denominational offices." Schiffert's recommitment to the church focus of her childhood did not come as a sudden revelation. "It was a growing, maturing," she says, "it was putting together of the past, present and future. More recently, it was an enrichment that I received on my journalism assignments within the United States and to 30 other



countries. And it helped to be told, over and over, that, 'God has given you so much. Now you must share it.'"

"How right it seems to be where I am," says Schiffert, "working on *Churchwoman* with its global issues and ecumenical emphasis—these are the threads woven throughout my life and a multid denominational family circle."

"My goal for today, as every day," summarizes Schiffert, "is to share in a meaningful way the 'so much' that I have been given." ■

For a one-year subscription to *Churchwoman*, send \$8.00 to:

Churchwoman
475 Riverside Drive, Room 812
New York, New York 10115
(\$20.00 for a 3-year subscription).

Jane Burton is director of media and interpretation for Church Women United.

Brief Prayers on News Items

TV series focuses on world hunger

Together with several other denominations and religious agencies, the ELCA is participating in a public television miniseries on hunger. The series, "Breakthrough on Hunger," will air this fall. Print and video study materials have been prepared so that congregations and individuals can look at the causes and cures for world hunger.

*Bounteous Lord, awaken from apathy those of us who live amidst plenty that sometimes blinds us to the needs of others.**

*Watch for an article on this subject in the December 1989 LWT.

Writers of color hold second workshop

This month 16 people from the Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native American communities will gather in Minneapolis for the second multicultural writers' workshop. Designed to train writers from the four ethnic communities for work on ELCA publications, the three-year program is sponsored by the Commission for Multicultural Ministries. Its goal is to make the ELCA's print ministry more inclusive.

Lord, guide the ELCA toward its goal of inclusivity. May we not only open doors but be enriched by the experience.

Women are "sisters" to El Salvadorans

Women from Europe, North America and various parts of Latin America have visited El Salvador from May through July. They were part of an ecumenical "chain of hope"—a human chain designed to be visible and present in El Salvador, to share and experience the situation of women from the different churches in the war-torn country.

Bring peace, Lord, to troubled hearts in a war-torn world. Make us instruments of that peace.

Liberian Lutherans urge care of earth

The Kpelle Literacy Center of the Lutheran Church in Liberia is urging Christians to take seriously their responsibility for care of the earth. Citing uncontrolled deforestation, overgrazing, overcultivation which destroys topsoil, illegal killing of animals and pollution of air and water, the center points out that everyone "has received these resources as a trust from the creator."

Teach us to care for the earth as you intended, Lord of all life.

Read your daily newspaper, build a prayer list to be revised as needs change.

Sonia C. Groenewold is news editor of The Lutheran.



QUILTS

Quilting Quilts, a 28-minute videotape available on a free-loan basis from Lutheran World Relief. To order, toll-free, 1-800-527-3211.

I will never forget the day I was going through the Howrah Train Station in Calcutta and saw a man sitting on the platform. I moved to go around him, and as I did so I realized that he was wrapped in a Lutheran World Relief quilt. I became teary-eyed and sad and thankful . . . I wanted to be part of a Lutheran congregation that participates in quilting, sad that the faithful quilters I met could not see the results of their labors, and thankful that because of their labors, the lives of others are made warmer.

This video allows quilters and others to see the results of their labors. It takes us on a journey with the Lutheran World Relief projects from congregations, through the warehouse, and then to the schools and hospitals in Tanzania. We see how the quilts, school kits, sewing kits, layettes, sewing kits and more are put together, distributed and used.

This is a must-see video for all congregations who participate in the Lutheran World Relief projects, and for those who don't.

Jackie Chattopadhyay
Mount Prospect, Illinois



THE WIDOWS: A Women's Ministry in the Early Church

The Widows: A Women's Ministry in the Early Church by Bonnie Bowman Thurston (Fortress, 1989, \$8.95).

The early church provided for its widows, offering both sustenance and status. Are modern Christians, in contrast, using widows to support the church?

By the year 2000, America's elderly will number 35 million and most will be women. Indeed, America's fastest-growing age group is its 85-and-older population. The poorest are those women who, as lifelong homemakers, have no pension, no health coverage—and no husbands. The word *widow* can connote silence, separation, and solitary existence, even for those women who are financially secure.

Bonnie Bowman Thurston has examined with love and learning the position of Christian widows from the time of Jesus to the year 325. Our widowed early church mothers, she reveals, were the first ordained women, defined but not defeated, dedicated, not diminished. Using the metaphor of widows as altars, the author emphasizes the crucial value of their dedication to continual intercessory prayer.

This scholarly but accessible book makes for inspiring and meaningful reading.

Nancy Kettering Frye
Lebanon, Pennsylvania



STRESSPOINTS: A Young Person's Guide to Peace of Heart

Stresspoints: A Young Person's Guide to Peace of Heart by Douglas Fazzina and Joseph Moore (Paulist Press, 1988, \$3.95).

Although I have been out of high school 20 years, I still have nightmares about that time and about issues of popularity, emotions and self-esteem. This book could have been written for me! The authors address 15 "stresspoints" in a nonpreachy way. They offer advice about how to work through the typical problems young people face.

The book's emphasis is on communicating, loving, caring, reaching out and being open to others and God. The last six chapters center on "Stressbreakers"—ways to find inner peace. These include prayer, meditation, sharing feelings, diet and exercise, forgetting oneself, and the Eucharist.

Although Paulist Press is primarily a Catholic publishing house, the advice offered is valid for teenagers of all faiths.

*Dixie Blasberg
Tripoli, Iowa*



THE USE-IT-UP COOKBOOK

The Use-It-Up Cookbook by I. Carlson Willand (Practical Cookbooks, 1985, \$9.95). Order from Practical Cookbooks, Box L, Malcolm Avenue S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414.

Leftovers! So you made enough for an army, but the troops didn't show up. Hectic family schedules cause courage waste—poor stewardship in a hungry world.

This book, crammed with creative suggestions, could pay for itself in a week. No warmed-over reruns here. Particularly welcome are Willand's treatments of problem foods such as egg yolks, corn, rice, applesauce, bananas, stale cake and pasta. *Use-It-Up Cookbook* offers new life to remnants of yesterday's menu.

If guilt about wasting God's resources isn't enough, the author asks, "How much does your household spend on food annually? Can you afford to throw 10 percent more of that amount into the garbage?" Beyond disguising leftovers deliciously, this cookbook suggests quick and easy ways to plan meals, shop efficiently, and store foods properly.

It's time to act, before those beans move any farther toward the rear of the refrigerator!

*Nancy W. Olson
Taylor, Wisconsin*



PUTTING THE PAST BEHIND: Biblical Solutions to Your Unmet Needs

Putting the Past Behind: Biblical Solutions to Your Unmet Needs by Les Jacobsen (Moody Press, 1989, \$7.95).

Putting the Past Behind, Les Jacobsen methodically defines five of "God-given basic needs"—love, freedom, internal controls, familiarity with our emotions and contemplation of God. He then talks about what can happen when these needs are not met, and how distress, bitterness, unresolved guilt, dependency imbalances and inferiority struggles can result.

The second half of the book shows how the Scriptures speak to our unmet needs, and offers many helpful insights, such as, "No human can be the source of another person's stability. And, 'Humility recognizes that personal worth is given by God, not earned by performance.'"

The author discusses topics such as suffering, phoniness, worry and the sovereignty of God. The chapter "Resting in Grace" illustrates God's work in the life of John Newton, the slave trader, who was later converted to Christianity and wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace."

*Ann Jacobsen
La Vista, Nebraska*



LIVING WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS

Living with Chronic Illness by Stephen A. Schmidt. (Augsburg, 1989, \$6.95).

SStephen A. Schmidt, who has Crohn's disease, explores, probes and debates the mystery of long-term illness with its limits and its possibilities. By sharing his experiences, he helps strengthen others who suffer and those who care about someone who does.

Schmidt writes: "Slowly, over the past 12 years, I have learned that my doubting moments are not faithless, but the very necessary components of faith. For only where there is uncertainty can there be the risk of faith, the leaping out and hanging on to the words of promise, to the story of the scandal, the cross."

I found this book to be honest, sincere, helpful, challenging, provocative, upbeat and believable. Schmidt gently reminds us to "give up and give in [so we can rest] as did Jesus in the last moments of his life, in God's hands."

*Doris Jean Hanson
Elk Point, South Dakota*

Unless otherwise noted, books reviewed in LWT can be purchased or ordered through most bookstores or by contacting your nearest Augsburg Fortress location. ■

How Do You Read LWT?

Sylvia Pridal

How do you read Lutheran Woman Today?

It may seem a strange question, but stay with me a moment and think about it. How do you read our women's magazine?

Even though Lutheran Woman Today is less than two years old, I still remember the excitement I felt as the first issues came to my home. I decided to examine this new magazine with the same openness I had for our new women's organization. It was time, I felt, for me to sweep out any cobwebs of over-familiarity and allow something new and fresh to enter in.

But how could I make this new magazine mine? How could I discover its content, purpose, mission? I've found a way to read each issue that lets the magazine itself help me. Here it is.

After I consider the cover, and before I thumb through the magazine or scan the "Table of Contents," I read the "Editor's Notes." From these few words, I am introduced to the main thought of many articles and can sense a theme or emphasis for a particular issue. Another advantage to reading the "Editor's Notes" first is that it helps me choose which articles are readings for me.

My "first" articles vary from issue to issue, and not every article every issue of Lutheran Woman Today speaks directly to me to my needs as a Christian woman in today's world. But, I haven't read any magazine, periodical or book in which every article or part of it appeals to me and my interests. And that's fine.

In the February 1989 issue, the first article that caught my eye was by Sally Fernholz, supervisor of the activity department at the Ma Lutheran Home in Madison, Minnesota. She wrote of "A Beary Good used at the home where my mother spent the last 11 years of her life." In the March 1989 issue, the first article I read was "No Drought of Faith" by Karen Bates, a pastor from Dawson, Minnesota. My husband, Jim, and I are farmers, and the drought of 1988 is still very real to us.

Editor's Note

In this issue, we have a special section on the theme of "Faith in the Face of Adversity." This theme is explored in the first article, "A Beary Good Used at the Home," by Sally Fernholz. This article is a beautiful example of how faith can be a source of strength and comfort in the face of adversity. The second article, "No Drought of Faith," by Karen Bates, is a powerful reminder that faith is not just a word, but a way of life. The third article, "The Power of Prayer," by Mary Ann, is a beautiful example of how prayer can be a source of strength and comfort in the face of adversity. The fourth article, "The Power of Love," by Mary Ann, is a beautiful example of how love can be a source of strength and comfort in the face of adversity. The fifth article, "The Power of Hope," by Mary Ann, is a beautiful example of how hope can be a source of strength and comfort in the face of adversity.

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Continued on page 42

Reading the Editor's Notes helps me choose which articles are my "first."

Flow Results

It is the composition of the House of the H.C.H. the world is to be produced. Both representatives will be to meet, to work together, to talk with others.

A THREE-DAY INTERVIEW

Worms, like other animals, are subject to various diseases. These are caused by parasites, bacteria, and fungi. The most common diseases of worms are roundworms, tapeworms, and pinworms. These parasites can cause a variety of symptoms, including abdominal pain, diarrhea, and weight loss. It is important to keep your pet's environment clean and to deworm your pet regularly to prevent these diseases.

[illegible]

Relationship to others

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

More too many days have passed after I receive my copy, I have most of the articles read. The compact size of the magazine makes it convenient to carry along in my purse to pull out and read during those "waiting times" I have.

friend Bernice takes an entirely differently approach in reading LWT. As president of our congregational unit, she scans the pages in the back titled "Women of the ELCA" first for the latest information from the churchwide women's organization.

ear of circles in which women review and use dual LWT articles to initiate discussion at their mgs. Some watch for authors who could be d as resources and speakers for the meetings athering they are planning.

n excited about the potential for evangelism
gh a Waiting Room Ministry. The Honor Roll
um is an excellent opportunity for mission in
vn congregations. These ideas were both de-
d in the March 1989 issue.

You may not have read these articles first; maybe you didn't read them at all. We are a diverse group of women, we who make up the Women of the ELCA. What appeals to me and helps me in my faith walk may not be what you are looking for, or needing, at the time.

My “second” reading is the lead article for the month, which is usually the first article in the issue. It helps me focus my thoughts on a thread that often weaves its way through several of the articles in the issue.

The “center” or main thrust of my reading in the LWT is found in the center of the magazine—the Bible study. I like to read the entire study text from the Bible, then go through the study, making my own notations to each question before I read the resource book. After reading that and other references, I go back and look at each question a second time, adding new insights gleaned from these other resources.

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How do you read LWT? You and I and my congregational-unit president friend are all different women with different interests and different needs. God made all of us different. And just as there is not a rigid mold we must fit into to be an active Women of the ELCA, neither is there one way to read our Lutheran Woman Today. I encourage you to approach and use the magazine as you wish, and may it bless and enhance your faith life. ■

a comprehensive history of those who believe and those

We would advise that people in attendance are aware of signs placed prominently throughout that the signs posted in (2008-2012) in Chapter 2, items were mostly language that birth and what is quoted of that's position. In 2012 James indicates that there are no not mentioned such "worthy things" will not be mentioned by a more direct manner of "worthy things." In this chapter's passage, James often is quoted of the 19th, fourth, and eighth. The movement there is that the one from more through Christ.

9 In John 20:1-18, Jesus refers to an individual that took place in the thorn/thorns. Read Matthew 23:1-12. Inhabited was not one laborer's time. What does this story tell us about the people of Israel in the time of Jesus? What is the significance of the parable on the gold? How does this Old Testament story help us to understand the significance of Jesus' death?

10 *Good John told me again. In this passage John uses the Greek expression "all up," which can have two meanings. First, it means that he "all up" by being long on a man. Second, it means to be "sunk" or "all up" in a glorious way. John has "all up" to end in 1888 and 1889. How do the two meanings of this expression help stating the significance of Jesus' love?*

20 **Shadows and Light**
Book John 8:12-25

Dr. Peter Panik 194, who wrote the 1944 book *Antisemitism and the Jews*. The book contains the story of the Jews in the world. In the book, the Jews are said to be the most powerful and the most cunning, as in 1944, 1945, or 1946. But more often, the Jews are said to be the most powerful and the most cunning against the world.

11 What description of "the world" appears in the following passages from John: 1:10, 2:15, 2:16, 3:12-17. How would the object of God's love, the Son of God, describe the world?

DOI: 10.1002/for

The “center” or main thrust of my reading in LWT is the Bible Study, found in the center of the magazine.

A Thankoffering Service

Esther Tse

We give thanks to God for the life, light and love that God has given us through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we, as daughters of the great Giver, commit ourselves in the sharing and spreading of God's life, light and love in Jesus Christ.

Leader: From the rising of the sun to the dawn of night, let there be light, as nothing under the sun is not under God's light of mercy. Flowers, birds, and the whole creation come and join us to praise and sing to the Lord a new song.

Hymn: *"Great Are Your Mercies, Heavenly Father" (printed p. 45; also available as No. 7 of Hymns from the Four Winds: A Collection of Asian American Hymns, Abingdon Press, 1983). Sung by group, or a soloist.*

Leader: We praise you, O God, for the offering of the beauty of nature.

All: You are the Creator of nature.

Leader: We praise you, O Lord, for the growth of spring, for the fruits of summer, for the color of fall, for the restfulness of winter.

All: You are the Lord of time and seasons.

Leader: We thank you, O almighty God, for the beautiful design of your creation and for the colorful human beings that people the earth.

All: You are our mighty God.

Leader: We thank you, O merciful God, for the generosity of your creativity—allowing us, your humble creatures, to be creative; for your gracious brightness—allowing us, your little candles, to shine in the darkness.

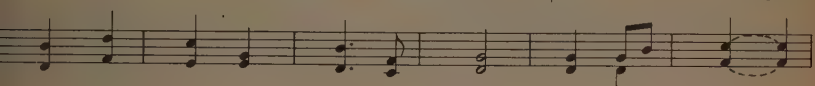
All: You are indeed our gracious God.

Leader: We sing to you, O God of light, for you shine in our words and deeds, work and rest, laughter and tears, allowing us to shine in the laughter and tears of others.

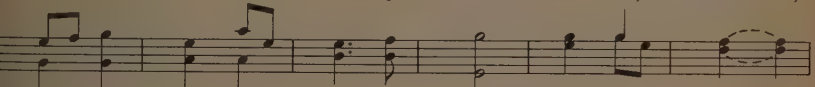
Great Are Your Mercies, Heavenly Father



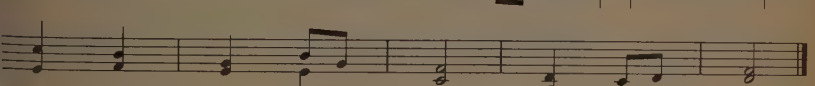
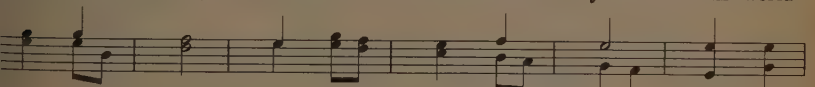
1. Great are your mer - cies, Heav'n-ly Fa - ther, food and
2. Be not so anx - ious, sis - ters, broth - ers, what you
3. Birds of the air fly here and yon - der, lil - ies
4. Could Sol - o - mon in all his glo - ry match these



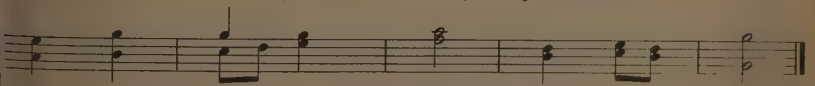
rai - ment you do still be - stow. Let me praise____
dai - ly eat and what you wear. For our God____
bloom, ar - rayed by na - ture thus; they sow not,____
bril - liant birds and love - ly flowers? Sis - ters, broth - ers,



you al - ways, serve you all my days. You the
sees and knows all our wants and woes. Hum - bly
and reap not, nei - ther do they spin. Our Pro -
do not fret; God's love fails not yet. This world



spring wind, I the grass; On me blow!
let us work and trust God's great care.
vid - er cares for them. More for us!
God made is your home, yours and ours.



u-chen Chao; tr. Frank W. Price
Chinese folksong; harm., W. H. Wong

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- All: You are truly the light of our daily life.
- Leader: We sing to you, O merciful God, for the great offering of our Lord Jesus Christ who lived and lives, shined and shines in the midst of our troublesome lives.
- All: *Sing, "God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens," Lutheran Book of Worship 463.*
- Lector: *Reading of the first lesson, Genesis 1:1-5, 14-18.*
- All: *Recite Psalm 8 responsively with the lector.*
- Lector: *Reading of the second lesson: 1 John 4:7-21. Reading the Gospel lesson: John 13:31-35.*
- Preacher: *A reflection, meditation, sermon or period of silence should be included here.*
- Leader: Let us give thanks and praise to the good news of life and life and love.
- All: The love embraces us in the midst of hostility; the light comes to us in the shadow of the dark valley; and the life enriches us in the midst of our sinful world, as the victor over death.
- Leader: Let us confess our faith to our God—our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, with the Apostles' Creed.
- All: *Recite the Apostles' Creed, found on page 65 of LBW.*
- Leader: Let us offer our hearts, and the tokens of our hearts to God the great giver of life, light and love. During the offering we receive on paper the prayer requests the community offers.
- All: *As the offering is received, the group sings "Thank the Lord and Sing His Praise" (LBW, page 72).*
- Leader: Let us pray for all women of God according to their needs: Merciful God, we pray for your light, life and love to be manifested in our decisions, actions and participations in both society and church so that people might know that we are your daughters. Lord, in your mercy.
- All: Hear our prayer.

er: Almighty God, we pray for our sisters in Central America and South Africa, for their struggles and sufferings and for the liberation of their land politically and socially. Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

er: God of the whole human race, we pray for our sisters in Africa, for their difficulties and struggles to feed their hungry babies. Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

er: God of light, we pray for the sisters who have never heard the good news of your light, life and love. Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

er: God of life, we pray for our sisters who are ill, or who are in need, or who grieve. May they find healing, comfort and abundant life in your son Jesus Christ. Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

er: God of love, we name the special joys and concerns of this community now. (*The petitions gathered during the offering are spoken.*) Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayers.

er: Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through your son Jesus Christ our Lord.

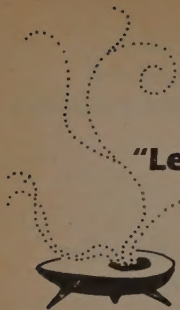
Recite The Lord's Prayer (LBW, page 71).

er: Let us praise God by singing "Sent Forth by God's Blessing" (LBW 221).

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MEDITATION

RUTH SIGMON



"Let My Prayer Be Counted as Incense Before Thee"

Psalm: 141:2a

Prayers from other cultures can help broaden our understanding and enrich our prayer life. Following are two such prayers from different settings that reveal the soul's desire for communication with, and blessing from, a God who loves all people.

Lord, lead me
From death to life,
From falsehood to truth
Lead me
From despair to hope,
From fear to trust.
Lead me
From hate to love,
From war to peace,
Let peace fill our hearts,
Our world, our universe.

International Peace Prayer

The ancient Sanskrit prayer above was introduced by Mother Teresa of India.

Lord,
so eager was I for Thy *darshan*
[presence] that I donned
the yellow robes

of a *sannyasi* [holy man].
I walked the dusty, weary miles
of the road from Dravida
to the Himalayas
in my bare feet.

I endured the heat of noonday,
the lash of monsoon tempests,
the perils of tortuous jungle paths.
Lonely forest shrines echoed to
kirtans [songs].
when I offered *juna* with garlands
of wild flowers.
But nowhere did I find Thee.

And then suddenly
I met Thee,
met Thee walking the roads
of my own heart.
Darshan;
Prayer of an unknown Christian

This prayer is prayed in traditional Indian fashion, with palms together, for thanksgiving, supplication and meditation. Many of our Indian sisters kneel in prayer and on occasion prostrate. It can create a worshipful atmosphere for us. ■

Ruth Sigmon spent over 40 years as a Lutheran missionary in India, working in rural and social outreach programs for women for the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church.

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Lutheran Vespers Interviews Koesters

Rev. Craig and Nancy Koester, authors of the LWT Bible study on the gospel of John, have been interviewed for a *Lutheran Vespers* radio broadcast scheduled for September 3, 1989. Tape and transcript copies of the interview are available free from Lutheran Vespers, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631.

Correction

We regret omitting biographical information about Linda Daniels-Block, author of "Breaking Our Addictions" (August). The Rev. Daniels-Block and her husband, the Rev. Roy K. Block, share a position as coordinator for leadership empowerment for the ELCA Commission on Women. They have two children.

LWT *Honor Roll*

Congratulations to the latest LWT honor roll congregations:

- ✦ Union Creek; rural Akron, Iowa
- ✦ Big Pembina; Langdon, North Dakota
- ✦ Calvary; Allendale, New Jersey
- ✦ Redeemer; Rio, Wisconsin
- ✦ St. John; Briceton, Ohio
- ✦ St. Paul Evangelical; Glenford, Ohio
- ✦ Covenant; Wheatland, Wyoming
- ✦ Bethania-Trondhjem; Rosholt, South Dakota
- ✦ Christ; Cottonwood, Minnesota

Honor Roll congregations are those in which every woman in the congregation subscribes to LWT. For more information, or to apply for honor roll status, write to LWT Promotion, Box 1209, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440, Attention: Sandy Dahlin.

Women of the ELCA Scholarships

In 1989 the Women of the ELCA scholarship program helped nine women begin or renew the pursuit of their educational goals. For many, the Women of the ELCA scholarship was an opportunity to pursue an educational program that had been interrupted. For others, it was the launch of the beginning of a path to a career. For still others, it offered a way of getting off welfare. The Women of the ELCA scholarships are available to mature ELCA women who can demonstrate a

several-year interruption in their education. Most often these are women who for several years have been out of school raising a family or working outside the home.

Scholarships are awarded for both graduate and undergraduate work. One scholarship specifically supports the education of a woman of color. The October issue of *Lutheran Woman Today* will provide more information about this program as well as the Women of the ELCA grants program.



Interdependence

All entities of the ELCA, the congregational/ intercongregational unit, synodical women's organization, and churchwide women's organization shall function interdependently and share responsibility for fulfilling the common purpose.

Principles of Women of the ELCA
Constitution and Bylaws

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